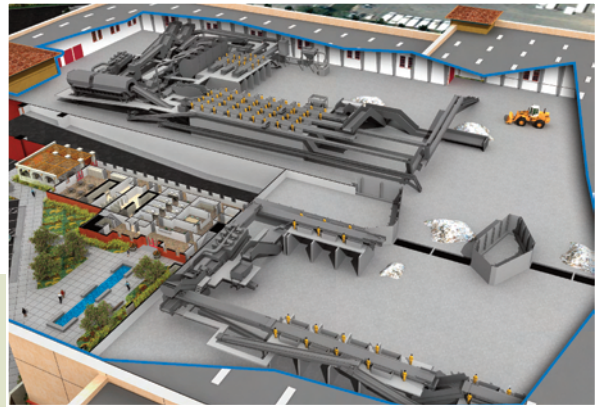


# MYTHS vs. FACTS

## Proposed Irwindale Materials Recovery Facility And Transfer Station Project Information





## Materials Recovery Facility and Transfer Station (MRF)

The materials recovery facility and transfer station being proposed in the City of Irwindale has been tailored to meet the needs of the community and the region.

“Materials Recovery” is another term for recycling. Recycling occurs when, instead of tossing them in a landfill, reusable materials are remade into either the same product or new products. Making new items from recycled materials saves energy and other resources while also reducing carbon emissions.

Just about anything in your home, office, or school that can be reused CAN be recycled into something else. You’d be amazed what can be done with a recycled product... a recycled soda bottle, for example, can be made into T-shirts, combs, or hundreds of other plastic goods that can be used for many years.

The facility will be a computer-controlled, state-of-the-art plant designed specifically

for the recycling and processing of municipal solid waste and is a key element to help the region meet California’s mandated recycling goals.

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The MRF will sort recyclable materials from loads of trash brought to the facility by hauling companies and private individuals. Such materials, that would

otherwise go to the landfill, include cardboard, paper, wood, metal, concrete, “green” or yard waste and soil. Materials will be sorted at the new facility, using conveyor belts, magnets, screens and hand labor. The MRF is estimated to capture an additional one million tons per year of materials for recycling.

For more information:

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**MYTH:** *The Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) proposed is really a landfill.*

**FACT:** A landfill, also known as a dump, is a site for the disposal of waste materials by burial in the ground and is the oldest form of waste treatment. A MRF (pronounced “murf”) is not a landfill where waste materials are buried or left outside. A MRF processes waste materials to extract recyclable items for transport to other facilities that convert such material to useable products.

If approved, the MRF and transfer station will go into operation by late 2012 –2013. The \$60 million dollar facility will allow for all recyclable materials to be mixed together and then processed. The 322,972 square foot facility located on over 17 acres will be permitted to process up to 6,000 tons of waste per day. The MRF will reduce the amount of solid waste going to landfills by removing recyclable materials from the waste stream and promoting recycling in area



communities to help ensure a brighter future through a cleaner environment. The MRF is a key element to help meet California’s mandated recycling goals.

All operations will take place within a completely enclosed building. All materials will be brought in to the enclosed facility and will only be processed in the enclosed building.

**MYTH:** *The MRF uses old technology.*

**FACT:** Unlike MRF’s from years ago that relied on hand sorting, the facility will use advanced recycling technology including magnets, screens and optical scanners to automate the sorting of recyclables. The efficiency of the process will improve local recycling programs by increasing capacity, resulting in an average recovery of up to 30 percent more recyclable materials while maintaining material quality equal to if not better than traditional

recycling processes. The MRF will be a single stream recycling facility (also known as fully commingled recycling) that allows for all recyclable materials to be mixed together and then processed at the facility. The Irwindale MRF will use technology and personnel to process recyclable materials from all over Southern California. The facility will help to recover and divert tons of material every day from landfills.



The new facility exemplifies Irwindale’s commitment to recycling and diversion through leading-edge technology. Items recycled at the facility create an environmental benefit because recycling materials such as paper, glass, and metal help protect valuable natural resources, save energy, promote clean air and water, and conserve landfill space.

**MYTH:** *The MRF will be dirty and impact the surrounding community.*

**FACT:** The City of Irwindale is strongly committed to the safe and responsible management of the facility. To ensure that the MRF does not impact the community, the facility and



surrounding perimeter will be swept daily to remove dirt, dust, and litter. As required by state law, all incoming and outgoing trucks will be required to cover their loads in order to reduce litter. The building has been designed with a limited number of automated entrances (doors will open and close after each vehicle) to contain odors. The building will be equipped with high-tech odor neutralizing and ventilation systems. After processing, all materials will be removed from the site, ensuring no materials will be permanently stored on site.

**MYTH:** *The MRF will increase traffic on residential streets.*

**FACT:** Trucks entering and exiting the facility will be required to travel on designated routes, which will include access to and from nearby free-ways. Nearby residential streets will not be impacted. The number of trucks used in the operation will be reduced from current levels. That is, the small trucks currently used will be replaced with larger trucks at a ratio of 3:1.

Vehicle miles traveled will also be reduced from current levels. In fact, truck traffic will be reduced, which may potentially reduce the impact to air quality. Trucks using the MRF will meet California Air Resources Board and South Coast Air Quality Management District requirements.

**MYTH:** *The facility will not teach about recycling*

**FACT:** An education center will be provided on-site that will teach the public about recycling and allow them to view the MRF operations. In addition, the MRF will be constructed using sustainable practices and materials, and will be eligible for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.



**MYTH:** *The proposed facility will not help local business.*

**FACT:** The proposed facility will help keep contractors in business since they will be able to utilize the facility to avoid long distance disposal options. The facility will also

provide employment for over 300 people. These employees will create a “multiplier effect” in the local economy, as they will likely eat and shop at local businesses.



**MYTH:** *The facility will take in hazardous waste.*

**FACT:** No hazardous waste will be accepted! By State law, hazardous waste cannot be disposed of with municipal waste. Any incidental hazardous waste will be placed in a separate holding area, to be removed by a licensed hauler. The MRF is a computer controlled, modern plant designed specifically for the processing and recycling of municipal solid waste. To maintain these standards, the facility will operate a highly effective load checking program.



**MYTH:** *The facility is not needed in the San Gabriel Valley.*

**FACT:** The Puente Hills Landfill, which serves the San Gabriel Valley, will close in 2013. The landfill currently accepts 13,200 tons of waste per day as the largest landfill in the nation. Los Angeles County also operates a MRF by the Puente Hills Landfill. Upon closure of the landfill, the County MRF will add a rail project that will have capacity for 4,000 tons of waste per day. This leaves no home for 9,200 tons of waste per day in the Los Angeles

Basin. Post landfill closure, waste will go to operating landfills much farther away. The collection trucks (\$300,000 each) cannot travel long distances, wait in landfill lines and return to pick up routes. Thus, a MRF and transfer station is needed to consolidate waste into transfer trucks that have three (3) times the waste capacity of a collection truck to transport to distant landfills.

**MYTH:** *The water table and soils will be contaminated.*

**FACT:** The MRF will be completely enclosed and will have sealed concrete floors with extra thickness to withstand heavy equipment and traffic without cracking. No waste will be allowed to enter the water table or soils. The MRF will be constructed to meet all seismic



standards. Trash collected will be deposited onto a specially designed tipping floor. Materials are moved with heavy equipment onto the walking floors toward the processing equipment. Recyclables are removed from the waste stream using a combination of machinery and people. Recyclable materials are sorted and then moved via conveyor to the baler.

More than 3 dozen commodities will be removed from the waste stream, including some construction materials. The MRF will allow economical retrieval of important recyclables, especially construction materials, from the waste stream.

**MYTH:** *Property values in the vicinity of the MRF will decrease.*

**FACT:** The area surrounding the site of the proposed MRF is industrial and it is located along two major thoroughfares. It includes a mix of aesthetically pleasing industrial facilities and unsightly buildings which have a negative impact on property values in the area. Towards this end, the City is placing a strong emphasis on quality architecture in the design of the MRF. This will not only improve the aesthetics of the area, but also remove blight and raise property values.



**MYTH:** *Odors from the facility will be very prevalent and harmful to the health of neighbors.*

**FACT:** All operations at the MRF and transfer station will occur in enclosed buildings that are equipped with high-tech odor neutralizing and ventilation systems. The processing building will be designed with a limited number of entrances to contain any odors from incoming loads. All loads will be processed in the enclosed building. Any

excessively odorous loads will be rejected by the facility employees before being unloaded. After processing, all waste will be removed from the site, ensuring no waste will be permanently stored on-site. If for any reason odors are evident, a natural enzyme system will be used to dispense a non-toxic substance to neutralize odors.

**MYTH:** *The facility will not meet local needs for waste diversion and recycling.*

**FACT:** As a result of Assembly Bill 939 signed into law in 1989, cities are required to meet waste diversion goals of 50 percent because of the increase in waste stream and decrease in landfill capacity. This law also established an



integrated framework for program implementation, solid waste planning and solid waste facility compliance. In California, it's the law to recycle. Cities and counties are required to divert at least 50 percent of their trash away from landfills, whether through waste reduction, reuse or recycling programs. The Irwindale MRF will allow for partnership with surrounding communities to help achieve this goal. Cities failing to meet the required diversion rate face the possibility of up to a \$10,000 per day fine from the state. The Irwindale MRF will help the area continue to lead the state in achieving State mandated diversion goals.



## MYTH: *The Irwindale MRF and Transfer Station will result in dozens of substantial negative environmental impacts.*

**FACT:** The proposed project would increase the recycling capacity of the region, a critical component of the County's ability to comply with state requirements. The community will also benefit from a significant delay in the need for additional landfills in the region.

Furthermore, the environmental impact report (EIR) being prepared for this project will contain numerous mitigation measures. The following are examples of potential mitigation measures to address any adverse environmental impact:



**Aesthetics** - The building will be designed with architectural enhancements such as varying parapet heights, vertical tower elements, wrought iron and decorative tile accents, and plaster building ornaments. The mature trees on the southern perimeter of the site will be preserved in place wherever feasible. The site will be extensively landscaped.



**Air Quality** - All operations will occur in enclosed buildings that are equipped with high-tech misting and ventilation systems. The number of trucks used in the operation will be reduced from current levels. That is, the small trucks currently used will be replaced with larger trucks at a ratio of 3:1. Vehicle miles traveled will also be reduced from current levels.



**Odor Control** - The processing building will be designed with a limited number of entrances to contain any odors from incoming loads. All loads will be processed in the enclosed building. Any excessively odorous loads will be rejected by the facility employees before being unloaded. After processing, all waste will be removed from the site, ensuring no waste will be permanently stored on-site. If for any reason odors are evident, a misting system will be used to dispense a masking agent to neutralize odors.



**Dust/Litter Control** - The facility will be equipped with a water misting system inside the facility to remove dust and particulates from the air. The site and surrounding area will be inspected on a daily basis to remove dirt, dust and litter. All incoming trucks will be required to cover their loads in order to reduce litter.



**Hazards and Hazardous Materials** - By State law, hazardous waste cannot be disposed of with municipal waste. Any incidental hazardous waste will be placed in a separate holding area, to be removed by a licensed hauler.



**Transportation/Traffic** - The number of trucks used in the operation will be reduced from current levels. That is, the small trucks currently used will be replaced with larger trucks at a ratio of 3:1. Vehicle miles traveled will also be reduced from current levels. In addition, the facility is freeway oriented and there will be limited routes to access the facility.

In addition, the facility will comply with all federal, state and local agency requirements, and will proactively implement programs and procedures to ensure compliance. Athens Services will work closely with the County Health Department, State Integrated Waste Management Board, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Water Quality Control Board to comply with health standards and regulations.

**MYTH:** *This facility will not accept Green Waste.*

**FACT:** The Irwindale MRF is extending innovations in recycling to yard waste by completing the cycle between waste and renewal. The Irwindale MRF will process up to 2,000 tons per day of green waste. Instead of filling landfills, this material, rich in nutrients essential for plants, will be turned into compost and reused.

Green waste will be consolidated at the facility and ultimately composted at Cal Bio-Mass organics in Victorville and reused as a

soil conditioner. Participating cities will still get diversion credit!

Currently, green waste collected in all residential programs in Southern California is being used as alternative daily cover at Puente Hills. This is the largest item for diversion credit in every City. In fact it is 30% to 50% of the residential waste stream in most cities. Without a solution when Puente Hills closes, cities will not meet the diversion requirements of state law.

**MYTH:** *The facility has no regional benefit.*

**FACT:** The facility will support 18 different cities in achieving the required diversion of municipal solid waste from landfills contained in state law. This investment in new recycling

infrastructure will better serve residents and businesses in and around the City of Irwindale. The following cities will use the MRF and transfer station:

- City of Azusa
- City of Bell Gardens
- City of Covina
- City of Glendora
- City of Irwindale
- City of La Canada Flintridge
- City of Monrovia
- City of Montebello
- City of Monterey Park
- City of Palos Verdes Estates
- City of San Gabriel
- City of San Marino
- City of Sierra Madre
- City of South El Monte
- City of South Pasadena
- City of Temple City
- City of West Covina
- City of West Hollywood



Aerial Photograph of Proposed Site of Materials Recovery Facility and Transfer Station

The project will be marketed to and made available for use to all surrounding municipalities. The need exists for disposal and green waste diversion and cities and haulers will desire long term capacity at the proposed facility.